

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01207 252301Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7117
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1207

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SOCI, UR
SUBJECT: CORRUPTION IN ARMENIA

1. NUMEROUS ARMENIAN EMIGRANTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO THE UNITED STATES HAVE REPORTED THAT THE YEREVAN OFFICE OF THE BUREAU OF VISAS AND REGISTRATION (OVIR) HAS BEEN CLOSED BECAUSE OF THE ARREST OF ITS STAFF. ACCORDING TO THESE ARMENIANS, ALMOST THE WHOLE POLICE COMPLIMENT OF THE OVIR HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH ACCEPTING BRIBES OR ABUSE OF THEIR OFFICIAL POSITION. ONE ARMENIAN REPORTED THAT PROSPECTIVE EMIGRANTS HAVE BEEN "TAXED" AS MUCH AS 50,000 RUBLES.

2. COMMENT. WHILE REPORTS OF VENALITY CONCERNING THE OVIR IN THE UKRAINE ARE NOT UNCOMMON, THE SCALE OF CORRUPTION IN YEREVAN IS STAGGERING. IN LAST SIX MONTHS, CONSOFFS HAVE NOTED THAT THE RULINGS OF THE YEREVAN OFFICE ARE OFTEN CURIOUSLY CAPRICIOUS WITH SECOND COUSINS PERMITTED TO EMIGRATE, WHILE LESS FORTUNATE (AND PRESUMABLY LESS WEALTHY) ARMENIANS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO JOIN FATHERS, CHILDREN, AND BROTHERS. END COMMENT.

3. EMBASSY WILL MONITOR ARMENIAN EMIGRATION AND REPORT ANY CHANGE OF EMIGRATION PATTERNS.

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Message Attributes

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